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Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations In Brief

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SUMMARY

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Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations In Brief

U.S. relations with Turkey take place within a complicated environment featuring several bilateral, regional, and Turkish domestic considerations. Current tensions have raised questions about the future of bilateral relations and have led to U.S. actions against Turkey, including sanctions and informal congressional holds on major new arms sales (such as upgrades to F-16 aircraft). Nevertheless, both countries' officials emphasize the importance of continued U.S.-Turkey cooperation and Turkey's membership in NATO.

Observers voice concerns about the largely authoritarian rule of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Turkey's polarized electorate could affect Erdogan's future leadership. His biggest challenge may be structural weaknesses in Turkey's economy—including a sharp decline in Turkey's currency. The following are key factors in the U.S.-Turkey relationship.

Russian S-400 purchase and U.S. responses. Turkey's acquisition of a Russian S-400 surface-to-air defense system in July 2019 has had significant repercussions for U.S.-Turkey relations, leading to Turkey's removal from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program. In December 2020, the Trump Administration imposed sanctions on Turkey's defense procurement agency for the S-400 transaction under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA, P.L. 115-44).

Bilateral discussions during the Biden Administration have not resolved U.S. concerns about the S-400. The impasse could prevent major Western arms sales to Turkey. If Turkey transitions to Russian weapons platforms with multi-decade lifespans, it is unclear how it can stay closely integrated with NATO on defense matters. Future U.S. actions regarding the S-400 and CAATSA also could affect U.S. arms sales and sanctions with respect to other U.S. partners who have purchased or may purchase advanced weapons from Russia—including India, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.

Turkey's strategic orientation and U.S./NATO basing. Traditionally, Turkey has relied closely on the United States and NATO for defense cooperation, European countries for trade and investment, and Russia and Iran for energy imports. Turkey's ongoing economic struggles highlight the risks it faces in jeopardizing these ties. A number of complicated situations in Turkey's surrounding region—including those involving Syria, Greece, Cyprus, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh (a region disputed by Armenia and Azerbaijan)—affect its relationships with the United States and other key actors, as Turkey seeks a more independent foreign policy. Additionally, President Erdogan's concerns about maintaining his parliamentary coalition with Turkish nationalists may partly explain his actions in some of the situations mentioned above.

In addition to the S-400 transaction, Turkey-Russia cooperation has grown in some areas in recent years. However, Turkish efforts (especially during 2020) to counter Russia in several theaters of conflict at relatively low cost—using domestically-produced drone aircraft and Syrian mercenaries—suggest that Turkey-Russia cooperation is situational rather than comprehensive in scope.

Turkey's tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean with countries such as the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) and Greece have negatively influenced its relations with several countries in the region, some of whom (such as the ROC, Greece, Israel, and Egypt) have grown closer as a result. In this context, some observers have advocated that the United States explore alternative basing arrangements for U.S. and NATO military assets in Turkey, and in 2020 the United States lifted some longtime restrictions on providing non-lethal defense articles and services to the ROC.

Outlook and U.S. options. Congressional and executive branch action on arms sales, sanctions, or military basing regarding Turkey and its rivals could have implications for bilateral ties, U.S. political-military options in the region, and Turkey's strategic orientation and financial well-being. How closely to engage Erdogan's government could depend on U.S. perceptions of his popular legitimacy, likely staying power, and the extent to which a successor might change his policies in light of geopolitical, historical, and economic considerations.

Contents

Introduction 1
Domestic Turkish Developments 1
Political Developments Under Erdogan's Rule 1
Economic Assessment and Currency Problems 2
Turkey's Strategic Orientation: Foreign Policy and Military Involvement 3
General Assessment 3
Russian S-400 Acquisition: Removal from F-35 Program and U.S. Sanctions 5
Background 5
U.S. Policy Implications 6
Drones: Domestic Production, U.S. and Western Components, and Exports 7
U.S./NATO Strategic Considerations 9
Regional Conflicts and Disputes 10
Syria 10
Cyprus, Greece, and Eastern Mediterranean Natural Gas 11
Middle East Rivalries and Libya 12
Outlook and U.S. Options 13

Figures

Figure A-1. Turkey at a Glance 15
Figure A-2. Exchange Rate: U.S. Dollar to Turkish Lira 16
Figure A-3. Bayraktar TB2 Drone 16
Figure A-4. Map of U.S. and NATO Military Presence in Turkey 17
Figure A-5. Syria-Turkey Border 18
Figure A-6. Competing Claims in the Eastern Mediterranean 19

Appendixes

Appendix. Maps, Facts, and Figures 15

Contacts

Author Information 20

Introduction

This report provides background information and analysis on the following topics:

- Domestic Turkish political and economic developments under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's largely authoritarian and polarizing rule;
- Turkey's strategic orientation—including toward the United States and Russia—as affected by Turkey's S-400 surface-to-air defense system acquisition from Russia and U.S. responses (including sanctions), Turkey's greater use and export of drone aircraft, the continuing U.S./NATO presence in Turkey, and regional disputes and conflicts (such as those involving Syria, Greece, Cyprus, and Libya); and
- various U.S. options regarding Turkey, including on arms sales, sanctions, military basing, and balancing U.S. ties with Turkey and its regional rivals.

For additional information, see CRS Report R41368, *Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas. See **Figure A-1** for a map and key facts and figures about Turkey.

Domestic Turkish Developments

Political Developments Under Erdogan's Rule

President Erdogan has ruled Turkey since becoming prime minister in 2003 and, during that time, has deepened his control over the country's populace and institutions. After Erdogan became president in August 2014 via Turkey's first-ever popular presidential election, he claimed a mandate for increasing his power and pursuing a "presidential system" of governance, which he cemented in a 2017 referendum and 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections. Some allegations of voter fraud and manipulation surfaced in both elections.[1] Since a failed July 2016 coup attempt, Erdogan and his Islamist-leaning Justice and Development Party (Turkish acronym AKP) have adopted more nationalistic domestic and foreign policy approaches, partly because of their reliance on parliamentary support from the Nationalist Movement Party (Turkish acronym MHP). Since the onset of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic, Erdogan has arguably gravitated even more toward nationalistic policies in an effort to distract domestic political attention from Turkey's economic woes (discussed below).[2]

Many observers describe Erdogan as a polarizing figure,[3] and elections have reflected roughly equal portions of the country supporting and opposing his rule. The AKP maintained the largest share of votes in 2019 local elections, but lost some key municipalities, including Istanbul, to opposition candidates from the secular-leaning Republican People's Party (Turkish acronym CHP). It remains unclear to what extent, if at all, these losses pose a threat to Erdogan's rule. The

[1] Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Limited Referendum Observation Mission Final Report, Turkey, April 16, 2017 (published June 22, 2017); OSCE, International Election Observation Mission, Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, Turkey, Early Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, June 24, 2018 (published June 25, 2018).

[2] Yasmeen Serhan, "The End of the Secular Republic," theatlantic.com, August 13, 2020.

[3] Seren Selvin Korkmaz, "Facing a changing main opposition, Erdogan doubles down on polarization," Middle East Institute, January 8, 2021.

next presidential and parliamentary elections are legally required to take place by June 2023. Erdogan's support has dipped in public opinion polling during 2021, perhaps because of economic factors such as Turkey's weakened currency and growing inflation.[4]

U.S. and European Union (EU) officials have expressed a number of concerns about authoritarian governance and erosion of rule of law and civil liberties in Turkey.[5] In the government's massive response to the 2016 coup attempt, it detained tens of thousands, enacted sweeping changes to the military and civilian agencies, and took over or closed various businesses, schools, and media outlets.[6]

In 2021, much political attention has focused on the Erdogan government's pursuit of a Constitutional Court ruling to close down the Kurdish-oriented Peoples' Democratic Party (Turkish acronym HDP), the third largest party in Turkey's parliament. The government is seeking to ban the HDP on the basis of claims that it has ties to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Kurdish acronym PKK, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization). Pro-Kurdish parties have been banned many times before (including before the Erdogan era), with the last instance occurring in 2009. Usually a new pro-Kurdish party emerges shortly after another one has been shut down, but in this case the government is requesting that hundreds of HDP members and associated political figures also be banned from politics, thus thinning the ranks of potential party leaders.[7] In March 2021, the State Department said that banning the HDP "would unduly subvert the will of Turkish voters, further undermine democracy in Turkey, and deny millions of Turkish citizens their chosen representation."[8] How Kurds who feel politically marginalized might respond is unclear. Major violence between Turkish authorities and PKK militants—which has taken place on and off since the 1980s—wracked Turkey's mostly Kurdish southeast in 2015 and 2016.

Economic Assessment and Currency Problems

Since 2018, Turkey has confronted economic problems that have fueled speculation about potential crises that could affect Erdogan's status and domestic political stability. Concerns persist about rule of law and problems with inflation and Turkey's currency. Some observers have argued that authoritarian governance has contributed to Turkey's economic downturn and declining foreign investment.[9] U.S. actions on sanctions and other issues, and a pending U.S. federal court case against Turkish state-owned Halkbank for allegedly disregarding U.S. sanctions on Iran,[10] could further affect Turkey's financial well-being.

Erdogan's biggest challenge may be the Turkish lira's continued decline in value (**Figure A-2**), reflecting structural economic weaknesses that probably contributed to the AKP local election losses in 2019. In 2019 and 2020, Turkey's central bank sold substantial foreign exchange

[4] "Recep Tayyip Erdogan's image and Turkey's economy are both taking a battering," *Economist*, July 10, 2021; "Erdogan rivals surge in polls ahead of 2023 Turkey election," *Arab News*, May 17, 2021.

[5] Department of State, "Turkey," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2020*; Department of State deputy spokesperson, Osman Kavala Should Be Released, July 27, 2020; European Commission, *Turkey 2020 Report*, October 6, 2020.

[6] Department of State, "Turkey"; European Commission, *Turkey 2020 Report*.

[7] Alex McDonald, "Threat to close pro-Kurdish party echoes long tradition in Turkey's politics," *Middle East Eye*, March 20, 2021.

[8] Department of State, "Actions in Turkey's Parliament," March 17, 2021.

[9] Jonathan Spicer, "When Erdogan's Turkish economic miracle began failing," *Reuters*, July 15, 2021.

[10] Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of New York, "Turkish Bank Charged In Manhattan Federal Court For Its Participation In A Multibillion-Dollar Iranian Sanctions Evasion Scheme," October 15, 2019.

reserves in efforts to bolster the lira, but the depletion of those reserves did not end the lira's slide.[11] International investor confidence has further declined in 2021, reportedly in response to Erdogan's change of central bank governors in March and the bank's subsequent decisions to hold, rather than raise, interest rates.[12]

Turkey's Strategic Orientation: Foreign Policy and Military Involvement

General Assessment

Trends in Turkey's relations with the United States and other countries reflect changes to Turkey's overall strategic orientation, as it has sought greater independence of action as a regional power within a more multipolar global system. Turkey's foreign policy course is arguably less oriented to the West now than at any time since it joined NATO in 1952. Turkish leaders' interest in reducing their dependence on the West for defense and discouraging Western influence over their domestic politics may partly explain their willingness to coordinate some actions with Russia in Syria and purchase a Russian S-400 surface-to-air defense system. Nevertheless, Turkey retains significant differences with Russia—with which it has a long history of discord—including over political outcomes in Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh (a region disputed by Armenia and Azerbaijan).

In recent years, Turkey has involved its military in the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, and Caucasus in a way that has affected its relationships with the United States and other key actors. U.S. officials have sometimes encouraged cooperation among other allies and partners to counter Turkish actions. Nevertheless, U.S. and Turkish officials maintain that bilateral cooperation on regional security matters remains mutually important.[13] In June 2021, U.S. and Turkish officials agreed to have Turkish forces in Afghanistan (which have been an active part of NATO operations there for two decades) secure Kabul airport after the withdrawal of U.S. forces,[14] but Turkey dropped these plans after the Taliban takeover of the country in August—reportedly subject to reconsideration if the Taliban requests Turkey's support.[15]

Turkish leaders appear to compartmentalize their partnerships and rivalries with other influential countries as each situation dictates, partly in an attempt to reduce Turkey's dependence on these actors and maintain its leverage with them.[16] Traditionally, Turkey has relied closely on the United States and NATO for defense cooperation, European countries for trade and investment (including a customs union with the EU since the late 1990s), and Russia and Iran for energy imports. Without a means of global power projection or major natural resource wealth, Turkey's military strength and economic well-being appear to remain largely dependent on these traditional

[11] "'Where is the $128B?' Turkey's opposition presses Erdogan," *Al Jazeera*, April 14, 2021; Mustafa Sonmez, "Where is the money? Erdogan feels the heat over foreign reserves drain," *Al-Monitor*, February 24, 2021.

[12] Economist Intelligence Unit, Turkey Country Report, accessed August 11, 2021.

[13] "Biden, Erdogan upbeat about ties but disclose no breakthrough," *Reuters*, June 14, 2021; State Department, "U.S. Relations with Turkey: Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet," January 20, 2021.

[14] Emre Caliskan, "Turkey displays inflexibility over Russian missile systems in bilateral presidential talks with United States; continued sanctions likely," *IHS Markit Country Risk Daily Report*, June 21, 2021.

[15] "Turkey drops Kabul airport plans but will assist if Taliban ask—sources," *Reuters*, August 16, 2021.

[16] Stephen J. Flanagan et al., Turkey's Nationalist Course: Implications for the U.S.-Turkish Strategic Partnership and the U.S. Army, RAND Corporation, 2020.

relationships. Turkey's ongoing economic struggles (discussed above) highlight the risks it faces in jeopardizing these ties.[17]

Turkey's compartmentalized approach may to some extent reflect President Erdogan's efforts to consolidate control domestically. Because Erdogan's Islamist-friendly AKP maintains a parliamentary majority in partnership with the more traditionally nationalist MHP, efforts to maintain the support of core constituencies may imbue Turkish policy with a nationalistic tenor. A largely nationalistic foreign policy also has precedent from before Turkey's Cold War alignment with the West.[18] Turkey's history as both a regional power and an object of great power aggression contributes to wide domestic popularity for nationalistic political actions and discourse, as well as sympathy for Erdogan's "neo-Ottoman" narrative of restoring Turkish regional prestige.

Turkish Hard Power: Using Drones and Proxy Forces in Regional Conflicts

During Erdogan's first decade as prime minister (2003-2012), Turkey's main approach in its surrounding region (with the exception of its long-running security operations against the PKK in southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq) was to project political and economic influence, or "soft power," backed by diplomacy and military deterrence. As regional unrest increased near Turkey's borders with the onset of conflict in Syria, however, Turkey's approach shifted dramatically in light of newly perceived threats. This was especially the case after Erdogan (elected president in 2014) began courting Turkish nationalist constituencies in 2015 and consolidating power following the July 2016 coup attempt.

Under this modified approach, Turkey now relies more on hard power to affect regional outcomes. Specifically, Turkey has focused on a relatively low-cost method of using armed drone aircraft and/or proxy forces (particularly Syrian fighters who oppose the Syrian government and otherwise have limited sources of income) in theaters of conflict including northern Syria and Iraq, western Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh.[19] Partly because the drones and proxy forces limit Turkey's political and economic risk, Turkish leaders have shown less constraint in deploying them, and they have reportedly proven effective at countering other actors' more expensive but less mobile armored vehicles and air defense systems (such as with Russian-assisted forces in Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh).[20]

Turkey's strategic orientation is a major consideration for the United States. The Biden Administration arguably signaled a more distant approach to Erdogan than President Trump's with President Biden's April 2021 statement recognizing as genocide actions by the Ottoman Empire (Turkey's predecessor state) against Armenians during World War I.[21] The Biden Administration also has been more outspoken on what it sees as threats to democracy, rule of law, and human rights in Turkey. However, the Administration, along with the EU, has praised Turkey's approach to hosting refugees.[22] Of the refugees currently residing in Turkey, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) approximately 3.6 million refugees have

[17] Diego Cupolo, "Turkish lira nears record lows as emerging markets struggle," *Al-Monitor*, May 13, 2021.

[18] Marc Pierini, "How Far Can Turkey Challenge NATO and the EU in 2020?" *Carnegie Europe*, January 29, 2020.

[19] See, e.g., Rich Outzen, *Deals, Drones, and National Will: The New Era in Turkish Power Projection*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, July 2021.

[20] James Marson and Brett Forrest, "Low-Cost Armed Drones Reshape War and Geopolitics," *Wall Street Journal*, June 4, 2021; Mitch Prothero, "Turkey's Erdogan has been humiliating Putin all year—here's how he did it," *Business Insider*, October 22, 2020.

[21] White House, "Statement by President Joe Biden on Armenian Remembrance Day," April 24, 2021.

[22] United States Mission to the United Nations, "Remarks by Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield during a Press Briefing at the Conclusion of Travel to Turkey," June 4, 2021; Nazlan Ertan, "Amid Afghan influx, Turkey's refugee policy gets tested with fire," *Al-Monitor*, July 28, 2021.

come from Syria, and about 320,000 persons of concern from other countries (including Afghanistan).[23]

Russian S-400 Acquisition: Removal from F-35 Program and U.S. Sanctions

Background

Turkey's acquisition of a Russian S-400 surface-to-air defense system, which Turkey ordered in 2017 and Russia delivered in 2019,[24] has significant implications for Turkey's relations with Russia, the United States, and other NATO countries. As a direct result of the transaction, the Trump Administration removed Turkey from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program in July 2019, and imposed sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA, P.L. 115-44) on Turkey's defense procurement agency in December 2020.[25] In explaining the U.S. decision to remove Turkey from the F-35 program, then-Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Ellen Lord said, "Turkey cannot field a Russian intelligence collection platform [within the S-400 system] in proximity to where the F-35 program makes, repairs and houses the F-35. Much of the F-35's strength lies in its stealth capabilities, so the ability to detect those capabilities would jeopardize the long-term security of the F-35 program."[26]

Turkish interest in procurement deals that feature technology sharing and co-production—thereby bolstering Turkey's domestic defense industry—may have affected its S-400 decision. Strengthening its defense industry became a priority for Turkey after the 1975-1978 U.S. arms embargo over Cyprus.[27] Over time, Turkish companies have supplied an increased percentage of Turkey's defense needs, with equipment ranging from armored personnel carriers and naval vessels to drone aircraft. While Turkey's S-400 purchase reportedly does not feature technology sharing,[28] Turkish officials have expressed hope that a future deal with Russia involving technology sharing and co-production might be possible to address Turkey's longer-term air defense needs, with another potential option being Turkish co-development of a system with European partners.[29] Lack of agreement between the United States and Turkey on technology sharing regarding the Patriot system possibly contributed to Turkey's interest in considering non-

[23] UNHCR, "Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Turkey," https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/refugees-and-asylum-seekers-in-turkey.

[24] "Turkey, Russia sign deal on supply of S-400 missiles," *Reuters,* December 29, 2017. According to this source, Turkey and Russia reached agreement on the sale of at least one S-400 system for $2.5 billion, with the possibility of a second system to come later.

[25] CRS Insight IN11557, *Turkey: U.S. Sanctions Under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA),* by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

[26] Department of Defense transcript, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Ellen M. Lord and Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy David J. Trachtenberg Press Briefing on DOD's Response to Turkey Accepting Delivery of the Russian S-400 Air and Missile Defense System, July 17, 2019.

[27] Omar Lamrani, "Facing Sanctions, Turkey's Defense Industry Goes to Plan B," *Stratfor,* November 7, 2019.

[28] Aaron Stein, "Putin's Victory: Why Turkey and America Made Each Other Weaker," Foreign Policy Research Institute, July 29, 2019.

[29] Burak Ege Bekdil, "West's reluctance to share tech pushes Turkey further into Russian orbit," *Defense News,* January 10, 2020.

U.S. options for air defense, including an abortive attempt from 2013 to 2015 to purchase a Chinese system.[30]

Other factors may have influenced Turkey's decision to purchase the S-400 instead of the Patriot. One is Turkey's apparent desire to diversify its foreign arms sources.[31] Another is Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's possible interest in defending against U.S.-origin aircraft such as those used by some Turkish military personnel in the 2016 coup attempt.[32]

Turkey has conducted some testing of the S-400 but has not made the system generally operational. Turkish officials reportedly expect to receive a second S-400 system sometime in 2022,[33] but the transfer has been delayed since 2020. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has warned Turkey that acquiring an additional system could lead to more U.S. sanctions under CAATSA.[34]

According to a Turkish national security analyst, CAATSA sanctions do not prohibit Turkey's military from directly transacting some sales with the United States, but they may handicap Turkish partnerships with Western countries to develop advanced weapons platforms.[35] Turkey has a need to upgrade or replace its aging fleet of U.S.-origin F-16 aircraft. If it wants U.S. or European options for next-generation fighters, Turkey may need to forgo possession or use of the S-400 in order to have CAATSA sanctions removed. Otherwise, it may turn to Russia or other alternative suppliers; Turkish officials have expressed openness to acquiring Russia's Su-35 aircraft.[36]

U.S. Policy Implications

How Turkey procures key weapons systems is relevant to U.S. policy in part because it affects Turkey's partnerships with major powers. For decades, Turkey has relied on certain U.S.-origin equipment such as aircraft, helicopters, missiles, and other munitions to maintain military strength.[37] Turkey's purchase of the S-400 and its exploration of possibly acquiring Russian fighter aircraft may raise the question: If Turkey transitions to major Russian weapons platforms with multi-decade lifespans, how can it stay closely integrated with NATO on defense matters?

Before Turkey's July 2019 removal from the F-35 program, it had planned to purchase at least 100 U.S.-origin F-35s and was one of eight original consortium partners in the development and industrial production of the aircraft.[38] Section 1245 of the FY2020 National Defense

[30] Flanagan et al., Turkey's Nationalist Course.

[31] "Turkey is buying Russian missiles to diversify supply," *Oxford Analytica*, January 26, 2018.

[32] Nicholas Danforth, "Frustration, Fear, and the Fate of U.S.-Turkish Relations," German Marshall Fund of the United States, July 19, 2019; Ali Demirdas, "S-400 and More: Why Does Turkey Want Russian Military Technology So Badly?" nationalinterest.org, July 14, 2019.

[33] Emre Caliskan, "Turkey displays inflexibility over Russian missile systems in bilateral presidential talks with United States; continued sanctions likely," *IHS Markit Country Risk Daily Report*, June 21, 2021.

[34] Tal Axelrod, "Blinken warns Turkey, US allies against purchasing Russian weapons," *The Hill*, April 28, 2021.

[35] Sinan Ulgen, "After Trump's Sanctions, Biden Can Reset with Turkey," *Bloomberg*, December 16, 2020.

[36] Paul Iddon, "Here Are Turkey's Stopgap Options Until It Can Acquire Fifth-Generation Fighters," forbes.com, March 15, 2021.

[37] Turkey also has procurement and co-development relationships with other NATO allies, including Germany (submarines), Italy (helicopters and reconnaissance satellites), and the United Kingdom (a fighter aircraft prototype).

[38] A 2007 memorandum of understanding among the consortium participants is available at https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/102378.pdf, and an earlier 2002 U.S.-Turkey agreement is available at https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/196467.pdf. For information on the consortium and its members, see CRS Report RL30563, *F-*

Authorization Act (P.L. 116-92) prohibits the use of U.S. funds to transfer F-35s to Turkey unless the Secretaries of Defense and State certify that Turkey no longer possesses the S-400. Additionally, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland stated in a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on July 21, 2021, that the phase-out of F-35 component production in Turkey that began in 2019 is expected to be complete "within the year, if not sooner."

An August 2020 Defense News article reported that some Members of Congress had "blocked" major new U.S.-origin arms sales to Turkey in connection with the S-400 transaction. Such a disruption to U.S.-Turkey arms sales has not occurred since the 1975-1978 embargo over Cyprus.[39] Major sales (valued at $25 million or more) on hold, according to the article, included structural upgrades for Turkey's F-16 aircraft and export licenses for engines involved in a Turkish sale of attack helicopters to Pakistan. Sales already underway or for smaller items and services—such as spare parts, ammunition, and maintenance packages for older equipment—were not subject to these reported holds.

U.S.-Turkey discussions in 2021 have sought to end the countries' impasse over the S-400, in hopes of halting CAATSA sanctions and bringing U.S.-Turkey defense cooperation closer to past levels. Despite media speculation about possible Turkish willingness to allow some kind of U.S. monitoring of the S-400 or otherwise limit the system's use, President Erdogan reiterated his unwillingness to give up the system in a June meeting with President Biden.[40] In the July 2021 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Under Secretary Nuland said that President Biden is committed to keeping sanctions against Turkey in place if it continues to possess the S-400.

Drones: Domestic Production, U.S. and Western Components, and Exports

Over the past decade, Turkey has built up a formidable arsenal of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or drone aircraft, to carry out armed attacks or perform target acquisition. Their primary purpose has been to counter the PKK or PKK-linked militias in southeastern Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. Turkey and its allies also have reportedly used armed drones against other actors in Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh (see textbox above). Open source accounts have reported that the drones have been effective in targeting adversaries, while also raising concerns about the legality of their use in these settings and the danger they pose to civilians.[41]

Turkey has focused on producing drones domestically. This is partly due to its failure in the early 2010s to acquire U.S.-made armed MQ-9 Reapers—reportedly because of congressional opposition[42]—and partly due to reported concerns that Israel may have deliberately delivered

35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) Program, by Jeremiah Gertler.

[39] Valerie Insinna et al., "Congress has secretly blocked US arms sales to Turkey for nearly two years," *Defense News*, August 12, 2020.

[40] "Erdogan says he told Biden Turkey is not shifting on S-400s—state media," *Reuters*, June 17, 2021.

[41] Dan Gettinger, "Turkey's military drones: an export product that's disrupting NATO," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, December 6, 2019. A panel of experts reporting in March 2021 on U.N. Security Council sanctions regarding Libya wrote that conflict during 2020 in Libya featured Turkish loitering munitions such as the Kargu-2 (produced by Turkish company STM) being programmed to fire autonomously on their targets without human involvement. U.N. Security Council, "Letter dated 8 March 2021 from the Panel of Experts on Libya established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2021/229, March 8, 2021.

[42] Outzen, Deals, Drones, and National Will.

underperforming versions of its Heron reconnaissance drones to Turkey in 2010.[43] Kale Group and Baykar Technologies have produced the Bayraktar TB2 (see **Figure A-3**), and Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) has produced the Anka-S. Turkey anticipates adding both larger and smaller drones to its arsenal over the next decade.[44] Selcuk Bayraktar, a son-in-law of President Erdogan, has played a key role in engineering the Bayraktar drones that dominate Turkey's fleet.[45]

While Turkish companies have assembled the drones, they have apparently relied on Western countries for some key components, including engines, optical sensors, and camera systems.[46] After a Canadian-produced camera system was reportedly found in a Bayraktar TB2 downed in Nagorno-Karabakh in October 2020, Canada halted export permits for parts used in Turkish drones, concluding in April 2021 that their use was "not consistent with Canadian foreign policy, nor end-use assurances given by Turkey."[47] Also in October 2020, a Canadian company whose Austrian subsidiary had produced engines for Bayraktar TB2s announced that it would suspend engine deliveries to "countries with unclear usage."[48] Additionally, Armenian sources raised concerns about the possible use of some U.S.-origin components in Bayraktar TB2s.[49]

It is unclear how effective Turkish replacements for Western-origin drone components can be going forward. Since 2018, TAI has reportedly been integrating domestically-produced engines into its drones, including the Anka-S.[50] In June 2021, Baykar Technologies officials said that a Turkish camera has been integrated into their newly produced drones and that they expect to have domestically-produced engines by the end of the year.[51]

Turkish drones' apparent effectiveness to date—such as in destroying Russian-origin air defense systems[52]—may have boosted global demand for Turkish defense exports. In addition to Azerbaijan purchasing Bayraktar TB2s that it used in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Qatar, Ukraine, Poland, and Morocco have reportedly purchased or agreed to purchase TB2s—with a Ukraine deal calling for co-production.[53] Tunisia has signed a deal to purchase Anka-Ss.[54] Some other European and Asian countries have supposedly expressed interest in Turkish drones. It is unclear whether a more combative Turkish foreign policy approach that helps market drones to other countries is a net plus or minus for Turkey's fragile economy, in light of the potential for

[43] Itamar Eichner, "Turkey accuses Israel of selling them defective drones," *Ynetnews,* June 24, 2018.

[44] Paul Iddon, "Turkey's Drones Are Coming in All Sizes These Days," forbes.com, October 4, 2020.

[45] Umar Farooq, "The Second Drone Age: How Turkey Defied the U.S. and Became a Killer Drone Power," *The Intercept,* May 14, 2019.

[46] "Canadian decision to halt tech exports exposes key weakness in Turkish drone industry," *Turkish Minute,* October 17, 2020.

[47] "Canada scraps export permits for drone technology to Turkey, complains to Ankara," *Reuters,* April 12, 2021.

[48] Levon Sevunts, "Bombardier Recreational Products suspends delivery of aircraft engines used on military drones," *Radio Canada International,* October 25, 2020.

[49] "How much does the production of Turkish 'local' Bayraktar TB2 ATS depend on foreign supplies?" *Ermeni Haber Ajansi* (translated from Armenian), October 26, 2020.

[50] Beth Davidson, "IDEF'19: Anka Aksungur to Fly with Turkish Engine by Year-end," *AIN Online,* May 1, 2019.

[51] Marson and Forrest, "Low-Cost Armed Drones Reshape War and Geopolitics."

[52] Seth Frantzman, "Russian air defense systems outmatched by Turkish drones in Syria and Libya," *Long War Journal* (Foundation for Defense of Democracies), June 10, 2020.

[53] Aishwarya Rakesh, "How Turkey's Bayraktar Drones Became an International Success," defenseworld.net, May 27, 2021.

[54] "After big wins, interest in Turkish combat drones soars," *Agence France Presse,* March 19, 2021.

Turkey's actions to isolate it from major powers that represent key sources of trade and investment.[55]

U.S./NATO Strategic Considerations

Turkey's location near several global hotspots has made the continuing availability of its territory for the stationing and transport of arms, cargo, and personnel valuable for the United States and NATO. In addition to Incirlik Air Base near the southern Turkish city of Adana, other key U.S./NATO sites include an early warning missile defense radar in eastern Turkey and a NATO ground forces command in Izmir (see **Figure A-4**).

From Turkey's perspective, NATO's traditional importance has been to mitigate Turkish concerns about encroachment by neighbors, as was the case with the Soviet Union's aggressive post-World War II posturing. Some similar Turkish concerns—though somewhat less pronounced—may stem from Russia's ongoing regional involvement on issues such as Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh, and may partly motivate recent Turkish military operations to frustrate some Russian objectives in these arenas.[56]

As a result of growing tensions between Turkey and Western countries, and questions about the safety and utility of Turkish territory for U.S. and NATO assets, some observers have advocated exploring alternative basing arrangements in the region.[57] Some reports suggest that expanded or potentially expanded U.S. military presences in places such as Greece, Cyprus, and Jordan might be connected with concerns about Turkey.[58]

Additionally, Turkish actions in opposition to the interests of other U.S. allies and partners in the Eastern Mediterranean (see "Cyprus, Greece, and Eastern Mediterranean Natural Gas" below)—particularly over the past two years—have led U.S. officials to encourage cooperation among those allies and partners.[59] In 2020, the Trump Administration waived restrictions on the U.S. sale of non-lethal defense articles and services to the Republic of Cyprus, effectively ending a U.S. arms embargo that had dated back to 1987, and attracting criticism from Turkish officials.[60]

Turkey's influence in the Black Sea littoral region and its relationships with European countries bordering Russia make its actions in this sphere important for U.S. interests. Ongoing Turkish defense cooperation with and arms sales to Ukraine, Poland, and Azerbaijan may present opportunities to make renewed common cause between the United States and Turkey to counter Russia, but alternatively could constitute steps toward an independent regional grouping that checks both U.S. and Russian ambitions. A case in point will be how Turkey regulates and controls other countries' maritime access to and from the Black Sea—a limited privilege granted

[55] See, e.g., Metin Gurcan, "Turkey's foreign policy becoming alarmingly militarized," *Al-Monitor*, September 22, 2020; Sinan Ulgen, "A Weak Economy Won't Stop Turkey's Activist Foreign Policy," foreignpolicy.com, October 6, 2020.

[56] Prothero, "Turkey's Erdogan has been humiliating Putin all year."

[57] See, e.g., Xander Snyder, "Beyond Incirlik," *Geopolitical Futures*, April 19, 2019.

[58] "Pentagon pushes back on claim that US to leave Turkey's Incirlik base," *Al-Monitor*, September 16, 2020; Joseph Trevithick, "Docs Show US to Massively Expand Footprint at Jordanian Air Base amid Spats with Turkey, Iraq," *The Drive*, January 14, 2019.

[59] Rauf Baker, "The EastMed Gas and Philia Forums: Reimagining Cooperation in the Mediterranean," *Fikra Forum*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 18, 2021.

[60] "Pompeo says US will lift arms embargo on Cyprus, Turkey furious," *Reuters*, September 2, 2020.

to Turkey in the Montreux Convention of 1936 (with provisions to give Turkey greater control when at war).[61]

Regional Conflicts and Disputes

Syria[62]

Turkey's involvement in Syria's conflict since 2011 has been complicated and costly and has severely strained U.S.-Turkey ties.[63] Turkey's priorities in Syria's civil war have evolved during the course of the conflict. While Turkey still opposes Syrian President Bashar al Asad, it has engaged in a mix of coordination and competition with Russia and Iran (which support Asad) on some matters since intervening militarily in Syria starting in August 2016. Turkey and the United States have engaged in similarly inconsistent interactions in northern Syria east of the Euphrates River where U.S. forces have been based.

Turkey's chief objective has been to thwart the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) from establishing an autonomous area along Syria's northern border with Turkey. Turkey's government considers the YPG and its political counterpart, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), to be a major threat to Turkish security because of Turkish concerns that YPG/PYD gains have emboldened the PKK (which has links to the YPG/PYD) in its domestic conflict with Turkish authorities.[64] The YPG/PYD has a leading role within the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an umbrella group including Arabs and other non-Kurdish elements that became the main U.S. ground force partner against the Islamic State in 2015. Turkish-led military operations in October 2019 to seize areas of northeastern Syria from the SDF—after President Trump agreed to have U.S. Special Forces pull back from the border area—led to major criticism of and proposed action against Turkey in Congress.[65]

In areas of northern Syria that Turkey has occupied since 2016 (see **Figure A-5**), Turkey has set up local councils. These councils and associated security forces provide public services in these areas with funding, oversight, and training from Turkish officials. Questions persist about future governance and Turkey's overarching role.

The Turkish military remains in a standoff with Russia and the Syrian government over the future of Syria's northwestern province of Idlib, the last part of the country held by anti-Asad groups (including some with links to Al Qaeda). Turkey deployed troops to Idlib to protect it from Syrian government forces and prevent further refugee flows into Turkey. A limited outbreak of conflict in 2020 displaced hundreds of thousands of Syrian civilians and produced casualties on many

[61] Text of the convention available at https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/formidable/18/1936-Convention-Regarding-the-Regime-of-the-Straits.pdf. The planned construction of Canal Istanbul, a waterway that would bypass the Bosphorus Straits, has led to speculation on how Turkey might seek to circumvent the limits on its control over other countries' transit between the Black and Mediterranean Seas. Melik Kaylan, "Turkey's President Erdogan Wants to Create Another Bosphorus Strait but Without International Rules: A Minefield for the Region and the World," forbes.com, May 17, 2021. However, Canal Istanbul's impact could be limited by Turkey's continued obligations under the Montreux Convention regarding maritime traffic through the Dardanelles Straits. Amberin Zaman, "Turkey's talk of pulling out of the Montreux Convention part diversion, part 'Ataturk envy,'" *Al-Monitor*, April 8, 2021.

[62] See CRS Report RL33487, *Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response*, coordinated by Carla E. Humud.

[63] For background, see Burak Kadercan, "Making Sense of Turkey's Syria Strategy: A 'Turkish Tragedy' in the Making," *War on the Rocks*, August 4, 2017.

[64] See, e.g., Soner Cagaptay, "U.S. Safe Zone Deal Can Help Turkey Come to Terms with the PKK and YPG," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, August 7, 2019.

[65] Rachel Oswald, "Sanctions on Turkey go front and center as Congress returns," rollcall.com, October 15, 2019.

sides. Russian willingness to back Syrian operations in Idlib perhaps stems in part from Turkey's unwillingness or inability to enforce a 2018 Turkey-Russia agreement by removing heavy weapons and "radical terrorist groups" from the province.[66]

Cyprus, Greece, and Eastern Mediterranean Natural Gas

A dispute during the past decade between Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) about Eastern Mediterranean exploration for natural gas reserves (see textbox below for broader historical context) has brought the ROC, Greece, Israel, and Egypt closer together.[67] Turkey has objected to Greek Cypriot transactions in the offshore energy sector because they have not involved the de facto Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) that controls the northern one-third of the island. Turkey also has supported Turkish Cypriot claims to an exclusive economic zone around part of the island. The ROC, Greece, and Israel have discussed possible cooperation to export gas finds to Europe via a pipeline bypassing Turkey,[68] and an Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum officially established itself in 2021, with the ROC, Greece, Israel, and Egypt among the founding members (and the United States and EU as observers).

Turkish Disputes Regarding Greece and Cyprus: Historical Background[69]

Since the 1970s, disputes between Greece and Turkey over territorial rights in the Aegean Sea and broader Eastern Mediterranean have been a major point of contention, even bringing the sides close to military conflict on several occasions. The disputes, which have their roots in territorial changes after World War I, revolve around contested borders between each country's territorial waters, national airspace, exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and continental shelf. These tensions are related to and further complicated by one of the region's major unresolved conflicts, the de facto political division of Cyprus along ethnic lines that dates from a 1974 conflict. The internationally-recognized ROC, which has close ties to Greece, claims jurisdiction over the entire island, but its effective administrative control is limited to the southern two-thirds, where Greek Cypriots comprise a majority. Turkish Cypriots administer the northern third and are backed by Turkey, including a Turkish military contingent there since the 1974 conflict.[70] In 1983, Turkish Cypriot leaders proclaimed this part of the island the TRNC, although no country other than Turkey recognizes it.

In late 2019, the Turkey-Cyprus dispute became intertwined with some longstanding Turkey-Greece disagreements (discussed in the textbox above) when Turkey signed an agreement with Libya's then-Government of National Accord (GNA) on maritime boundaries (see **Figure A-6**).[71] The dispute increased Turkey-Greece naval tensions, especially after Greece and Egypt reached a maritime agreement in August 2020 rivaling the 2019 Turkey-Libya deal.[72]

[66] Text of agreement available at https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/full-text-of-turkey-russia-memorandum-on-idlib-revealed-1.771953.

[67] Yaroslav Trofimov, "Turkey, Rivals Square Off Over Gas Finds," *Wall Street Journal*, August 3, 2020.

[68] "Battling over boundaries," *Economist*, August 22, 2020. The feasibility of such a pipeline is unclear. Sue Surkes, "Mistake to leave Turkey out of new East Med gas club – international expert," *Times of Israel*, September 27, 2020.

[69] For more information, see CRS Report R41368, *Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas and CRS Report R41136, *Cyprus: Reunification Proving Elusive*, by Vincent L. Morelli.

[70] Turkey retains between 30,000 and 40,000 troops on the island (supplemented by several thousand Turkish Cypriot soldiers). This presence is countered by a Greek Cypriot force of approximately 12,000 with reported access to 50,000 reserves. "Cyprus—Army," *Jane's Group UK*, October 2019. The United Nations maintains a peacekeeping mission (UNFICYP) of approximately 900 personnel within a buffer zone headquartered in Cyprus's divided capital of Nicosia. The United Kingdom maintains approximately 3,000 personnel at two sovereign base areas on the southern portion of the island at Akrotiri and Dhekelia.

[71] See also "Turkish-Greek Aegean Dispute" at globalsecurity.org.

[72] Michael Tanchum, "How Did the Eastern Mediterranean Become the Eye of a Geopolitical Storm?"

Tensions heightened in the summer of 2020 as Greece and the ROC objected to Turkish drilling vessels exploring for natural gas in what they consider to be their EEZs; Turkey disputes some of the Greek and ROC EEZ claims.[73] Greek officials have at times indicated a willingness to settle the maritime border dispute at an international court, but Turkish officials' stated preference is to settle the dispute via bilateral negotiations.

Efforts by individual European governments, the EU, NATO, and the United States to de-escalate tensions have highlighted competing international interests and objectives. Greece and the ROC are EU members, but Turkey is not, and prospects for its accession are dim for the foreseeable future. Greece and Turkey are NATO members, but the ROC is not.

Turkey-Greece talks on territorial disputes resumed in January 2021 after a five-year hiatus. While the diplomatic engagement suggests that both countries seek to deescalate the tensions that spiked in 2020,[74] significant progress on the underlying issues of dispute remains elusive.[75] Preliminary United Nations-led talks on Cyprus in April 2021 did not lead to the two sides restarting official reunification negotiations.[76] ROC President Nicos Anastasiades has said he will not negotiate as long as the TRNC's leader Ersin Tatar, who assumed office in October 2020, advocates Turkish Cypriot independence and a "two-state solution."[77] President Erdogan has echoed Tatar's advocacy of a two-state solution.[78]

Middle East Rivalries and Libya

In the Middle East, Sunni Arab governments that support traditional authoritarian governance models in the region—notably Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Egypt—regard Turkey with suspicion, largely because of the Turkish government's sympathies for Islamist political groups and its close relationship with Qatar.[79] Ties with Turkey bolster Qatar amid its isolation from other Arab states, and Turkey has relied on Qatari resources to strengthen its troubled financial position and support its regional military efforts.[80] Further signs of tension between Turkey and Sunni Arab states come from a Turkish military presence at bases in Qatar and Somalia.[81]

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foreignpolicy.com, August 18, 2020.

[73] Panagiotis Kouparanis, "Turkey's maritime claims in the Mediterranean Sea raise thorny legal questions," *Deutsche Welle*, July 21, 2020. The United States has not ratified the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), though it does recognize UNCLOS as a codification of customary international law. Greece and the ROC have ratified UNCLOS; Turkey has not.

[74] Sean Matthews, "Turkey, Greece look for calm Eastern Mediterranean summer," *Al Jazeera*, June 2, 2021; Yannis Palaiologos, "Mitsotakis, Erdogan agree to calm summer," *Ekathimerini*, June 15, 2021.

[75] Nektaria Stamouli, "Greece, Turkey to Restart Talks this Month," politico.eu, January 11, 2021; Greek National Security Advisor Thanos Dokos, "Greek National Security: An Assessment and Challenges," *Ekathimerini*, January 25, 2021.

[76] John Psaropoulos, "Cyprus' reunification: What next after failed talks?" *Al Jazeera*, June 7, 2021. The U.N. Security Council reaffirmed its support for "an enduring, comprehensive, and just settlement based on a bicommunal, bizonal federation with political equality" in a resolution adopted on January 29, 2021 (UNSC Resolution 2561/2021).

[77] "After another Cyprus talks collapse, Anastasiades walking away," *National Herald*, May 3, 2021.

[78] Dorian Jones, "Erdogan Calls for Two-state Solution on Cyprus," *Voice of America*, July 20, 2021.

[79] Flanagan et al., *Turkey's Nationalist Course*; Andrew England, et al., "UAE vs Turkey: the regional rivalries pitting MBZ against Erdogan," *Financial Times*, October 26, 2020.

[80] Ibrahim Sunnetci, "Turkey and Qatar: Foul-Weather Friends!" *Defence Turkey*, Vol. 14, Issue 98, 2020, pp. 34-47; "Qatar boosts support for Turkey's regional forays," *The Arab Weekly*, July 5, 2020.

[81] Sunnetci, "Turkey and Qatar"; "Turkey to train 1/3 of entire Somali military, envoy says," *Daily Sabah*, August 4,

Libya represents another aspect of Turkey's rivalry with these states. Turkey has played a prominent role in conflict in Libya since late 2019, when Turkish officials reached maritime boundary and security agreements with Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA), which was recognized at that time by the United States and the U.N. Security Council. Turkish military personnel then began providing advice and material support (including drone aircraft and Syrian mercenaries) to Islamist-friendly western Libya-based forces fighting against Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) movement.[82] Egypt, the UAE, Russia, and others back Haftar's LNA movement. After a U.N.-brokered cease-fire was reached in October 2020, Libyans approved a new Government of National Unity (GNU) in March 2021.

The terms of the Libyan cease-fire agreement and U.N. Security Council Resolution 2570 call for all mercenaries and foreign fighters to be withdrawn from Libya. U.S. officials view this requirement as applying to all foreign forces, though Turkey asserts that its forces remain present under the terms of its agreement with the previously sovereign GNA.[83] At a June 2021 international conference on Libya, Turkey and Russia reportedly agreed to the gradual removal of some of their respective Syrian proxy forces. Turkey appears reluctant to end its military presence—presumably because of concerns about losing leverage—and may seek enduring access to military facilities in western Libya.[84]

Turkey's involvement in Libya has increased the overlap between Turkey's disputes in the Eastern Mediterranean and its rivalry with other states in the region. In 2021, Turkey has made some attempts to improve ties with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Israel, but prospects for rapprochement with these states remain unclear.[85] Turkey maintains diplomatic ties and significant levels of trade with Israel, but Turkey-Israel relations have deteriorated significantly during Erdogan's rule.[86]

Outlook and U.S. Options

The future of U.S.-Turkey relations could depend on a number of factors, including the following:

- whether Turkey makes its Russian S-400 system fully operational and purchases additional Russian arms;
- how various regional crises (Syria, Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh, Eastern Mediterranean disputes with Greece and Cyprus) develop and influence Turkey's relationships with key actors (including the United States, Russia, China, the European Union, Israel, Iran, and Sunni Arab states);
- whether Turkey can project power and create its own sphere of influence using military and economic cooperation (including defense exports); and
- whether President Erdogan is able to maintain control in the country given its economic problems and human rights concerns.

2020.

[82] Department of Defense Office of the Inspector General, East Africa Counterterrorism Operation, North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation, Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress, January 1, 2020 - March 30, 2020, July 16, 2020.

[83] Fehim Tastekin, "Turkey stalls on withdrawal of foreign forces from Libya," *Al-Monitor*, June 30, 2021.

[84] "'Step by step' withdrawal of foreign fighters from Libya agreed in Berlin," *Arab Weekly*, June 24, 2021; Fehim Tastekin, "Turkey stalls on withdrawal of foreign forces from Libya," *Al-Monitor*, June 30, 2021.

[85] Tuvan Gumrukcu, "Turkey's Erdogan woos Egypt, Gulf states in push to repair ties," *Reuters*, June 1, 2021.

[86] See CRS Report R41368, *Turkey: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jim Zanotti and Clayton Thomas.

Administration and congressional actions regarding Turkey can have implications for bilateral ties, U.S. political-military options in the region, and Turkey's strategic orientation and financial well-being. These actions could include placing conditions on arms sales, whether and how to impose CAATSA sanctions, assessing U.S./NATO basing options, and balancing relations with Turkey and its regional rivals. U.S. actions related to Turkey's acquisition of the S-400 also could affect U.S. relations with respect to other key partners who have purchased or may purchase advanced weapons from Russia—including India, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.

How closely the U.S. government might engage Erdogan's government could depend on U.S. perceptions of his popular legitimacy, likely staying power, and the extent to which a successor might change his policies in light of geopolitical, historical, and economic considerations. Support for Erdogan relative to other key domestic figures may hinge partly on national security and economic conditions and developments, and partly on ideological or group identity considerations stemming from ethnicity, religion, gender, and class.

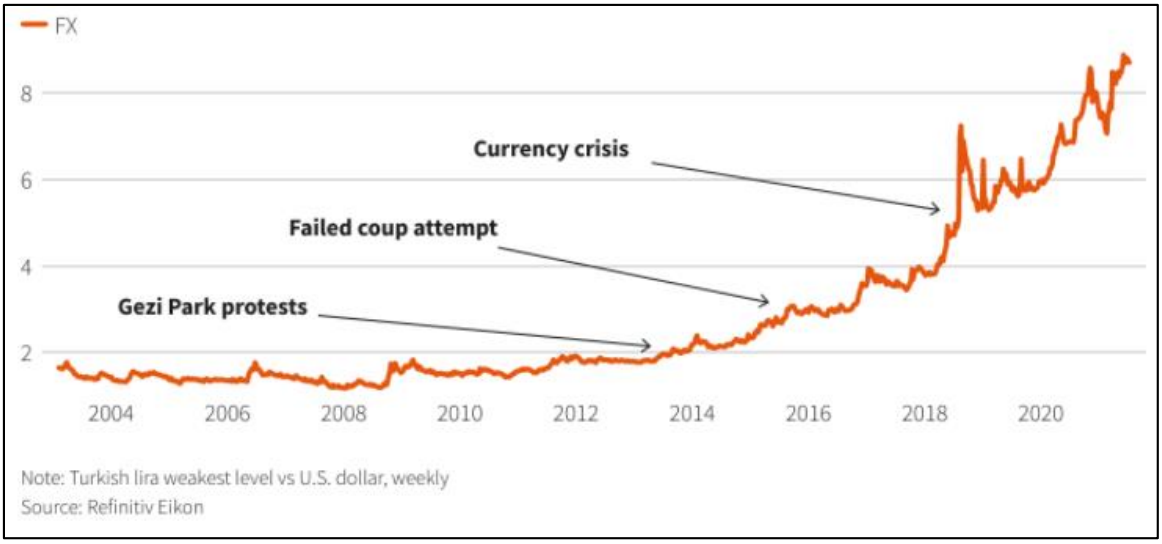
Appendix. Maps, Facts, and Figures

Figure A-1. Turkey at a Glance

Geography	*Area:* 783,562 sq km (302,535 sq. mile), slightly larger than Texas
People	*Population:* 82,482,383. Most populous cities (2020): Istanbul 15.2 mil, Ankara 5.1 mil, Izmir 3 mil, Bursa 2.0 mil, Adana 1.8 mil, Gaziantep 1.7 mil. *% of Population 14 or Younger:* 23.4% *Ethnic Groups:* Turks 70%-75%; Kurds 19%; Other minorities 7%-12% (2016) *Religion:* Muslim 99.8% (mostly Sunni), Others (mainly Christian and Jewish) 0.2% *Literacy:* 96.2% (male 98.8%, female 93.5%) (2017)
Economy	*GDP Per Capita (at purchasing power parity):* $30,049 *Real GDP Growth:* 5.6% *Inflation:* 16.6% *Unemployment:* 12.3% *Budget Deficit as % of GDP:* 2.8% *Public Debt as % of GDP:* 39.6% *Current Account Deficit as % of GDP:* 2.7% *International currency reserves:* $88.4 billion

Source: Graphic created by CRS. Map boundaries and information generated by Hannah Fischer using Department of State Boundaries (2011); Esri (2014); ArcWorld (2014); DeLorme (2014). Fact information (2021 estimates or forecasts unless otherwise specified) from International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database; Economist Intelligence Unit; and Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*.

Figure A-2. Exchange Rate: U.S. Dollar to Turkish Lira



Source: *Reuters*, July 15, 2021.

Figure A-3. Bayraktar TB2 Drone

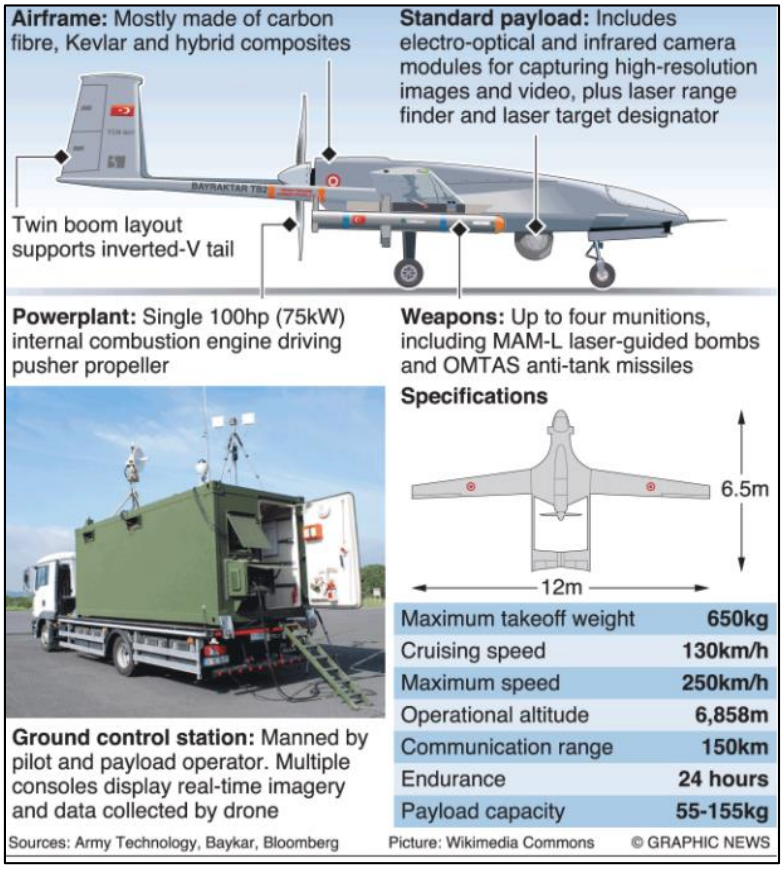
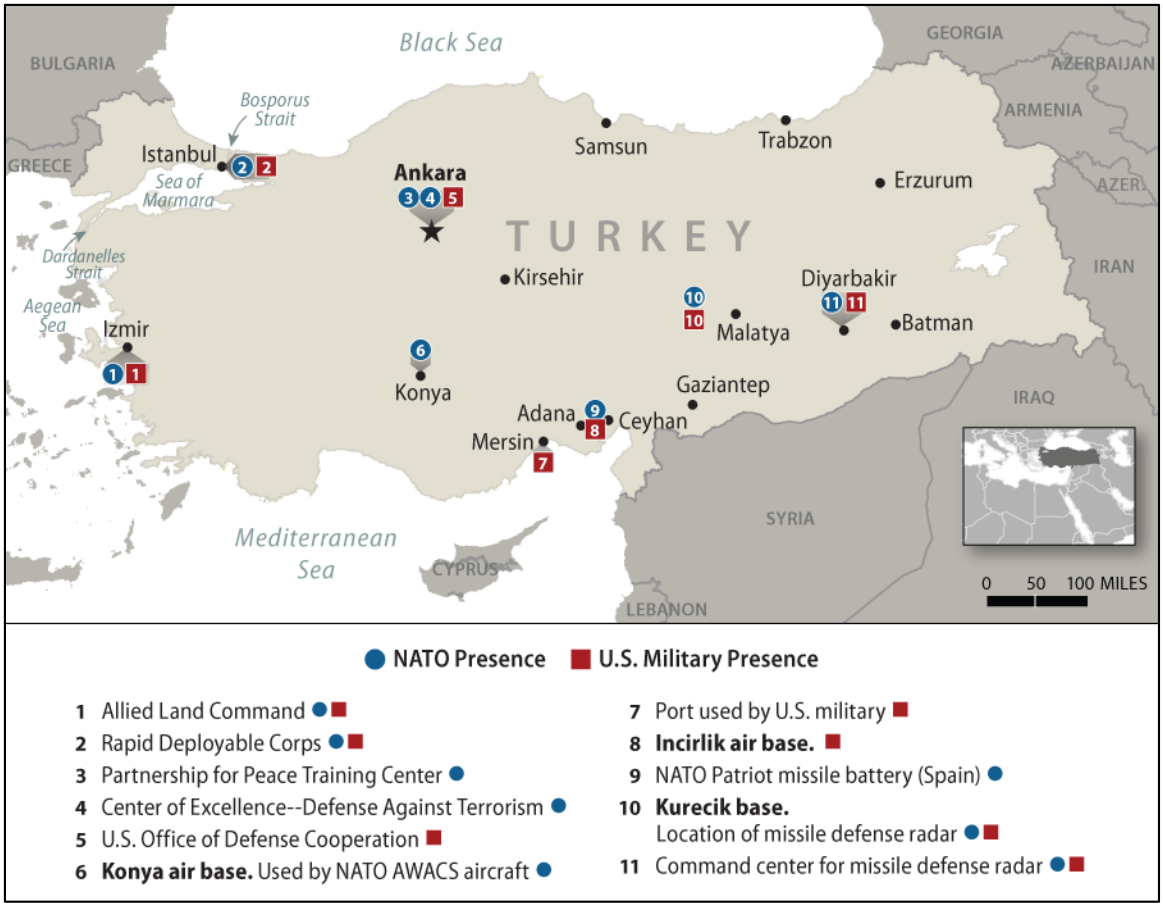


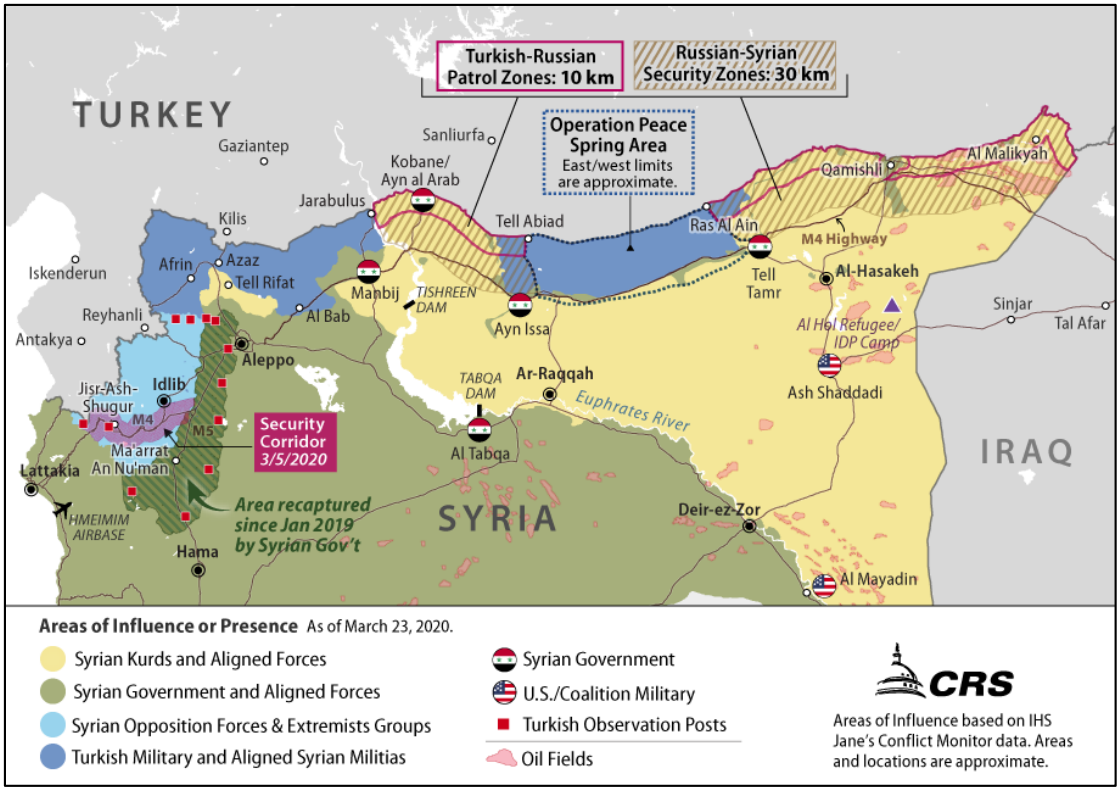
Figure A-4. Map of U.S. and NATO Military Presence in Turkey



Sources: Department of Defense, NATO, and various media outlets; adapted by CRS.

Note: All locations are approximate.

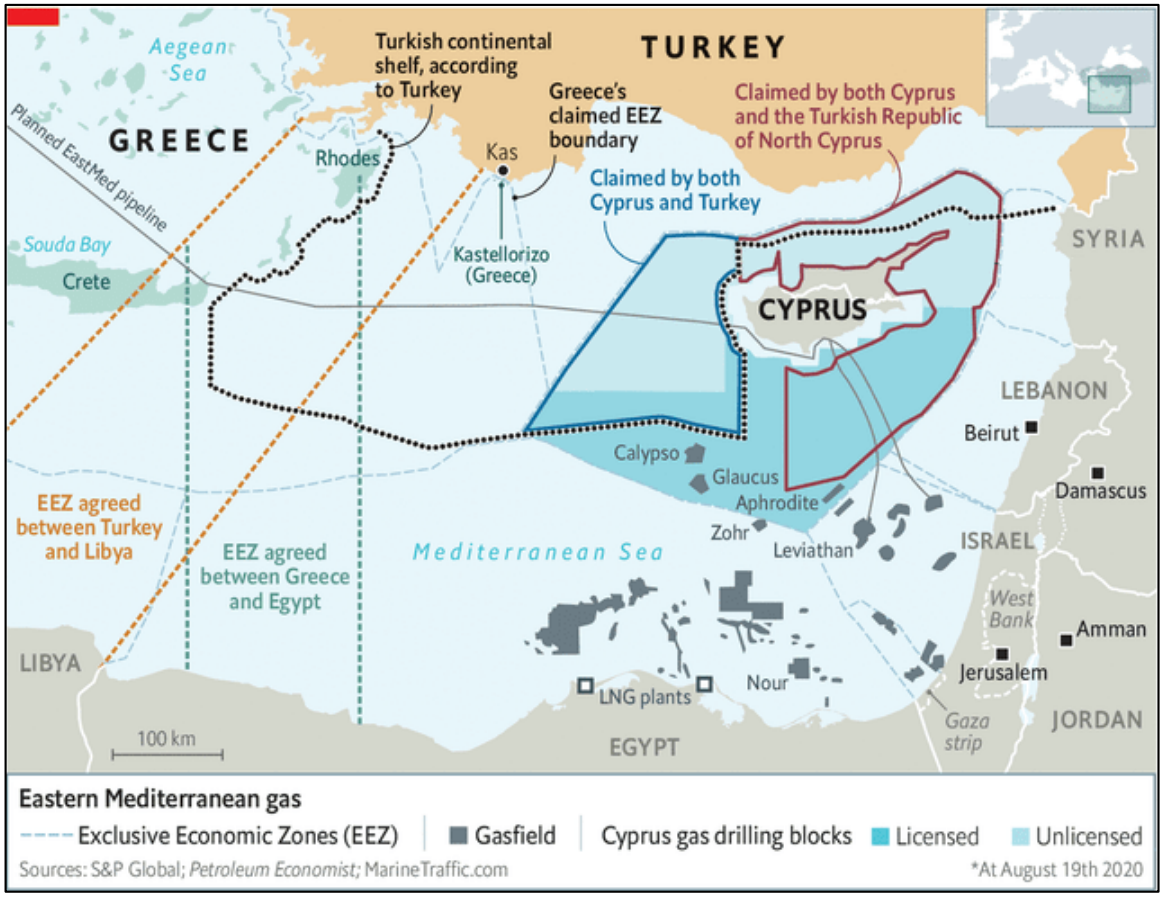
Figure A-5. Syria-Turkey Border



Source: CRS, using area of influence data from IHS Jane's Conflict Monitor. All areas of influence approximate and subject to change. Other sources include U.N. OCHA, Esri, and social media reports.

Note: This map does not depict all U.S. bases in Syria.

Figure A-6. Competing Claims in the Eastern Mediterranean



Source: Main map created by The Economist, with slight modifications by CRS.

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